

REMARKS

Claims 12-21 and 23-25 are pending in the application. Of these, Claims 14, 17, 20, 21, and 23-25 are rejected. Claims 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, and 19 are objected to. Reconsideration of Claims 14, 17, 20-21, and 23-25 is respectfully requested.

The Rejection of Claims 23-25 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 23-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by anyone of Bergstrom et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,595,349), or Barber, III (U.S. Patent No. 5,569,331), or Martin (U.S. Patent No. 3,881,148).

As now amended, Claim 23 recites "a vertically disposed conduit with an inlet and outlet for goods, and an inlet and outlet for a sanitizing agent, wherein a rotating tapered screw conveyor within the conduit transfers the goods through the conduit, the inlet for the agent is above the tapered screw conveyor and the outlet for the agent is below the tapered screw conveyor."

For a reference to be anticipatory, the reference must describe each and every element exactly as in the claim. Because neither one of the Bergstrom, Barber, or Martin references describes the invention defined by Claim 23, Claim 23 is allowable. Furthermore, there is no teaching or suggestion in any one of the references, either individually or in combination that remotely renders the invention defined by Claim 23 obvious.

Accordingly, the withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 23 is respectfully requested. Claim 24 is directly dependent from Claim 23, therefore, Claim 24 is also allowable.

As amended, Claim 25 recites "a vertically disposed conduit with an inlet and outlet for goods, and an inlet and outlet for carbon dioxide, wherein a rotating tapered screw conveyor section within the conduit transfers the goods through the conduit, and wherein the outlet for

LAW OFFICES OF
CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESS^{LLC}
1420 Fifth Avenue
Suite 2800
Seattle, Washington 98101
206.682.8100

carbon dioxide is below the tapered screw conveyor section and the inlet for carbon dioxide is above the tapered screw conveyor section."

For a reference to be anticipatory, the reference must describe each and every element exactly as in the claim. Because neither one of the Bergstrom, Barber, or Martin references describes the invention defined by Claim 25, Claim 25 is allowable. Furthermore, there is no teaching or suggestion in any one of the references, either individually or in combination that remotely renders the invention defined by Claim 25 obvious.

Accordingly, the withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 25 is respectfully requested.

The Rejection of Claims 20-21, 14 and 17 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 20-21, 14, and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bergstrom et al., or Barber, III, or Martin as applied above, and further in view of Mosenson (U.S. Patent No. 5,620,654). Claims 20, 14, and 17 are indirectly dependent from Claim 23. Claim 23 is submitted to be allowable over the references of record. The Mosenson reference does not teach or suggest any of the deficiencies noted with the Bergstrom, Barber, and Martin references. Accordingly, Claims 20, 14, and 17 are allowable.

As amended, Claim 21 recites, "a mixing section for mixing goods with an agent; and a vertically disposed conduit with an inlet and outlet for goods and an inlet and outlet for an agent, wherein the conduit comprises a first screw conveyor section within the conduit to compress the goods while transferring the goods through the conduit, and a second tapered screw conveyor section above the first screw conveyor section, the inlet for an agent is above the tapered screw conveyor section and the outlet for an agent is below the tapered screw conveyor section." The Bergstrom, Barber, Martin, and Mosenson references do not teach or remotely suggest the invention defined by Claim 21.

Accordingly, the withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 21 is respectfully requested.

LAW OFFICES OF
CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESS^{PLLC}
1420 Fifth Avenue
Suite 2800
Seattle, Washington 98101
206.682.8100

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, and 19 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated would be allowable if written in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, and 19 are directly or indirectly dependent on Claim 23 that is believed to be allowable.

Accordingly, applicant submits that the objection to Claims 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, and 19 has been overcome.

New Claim 26

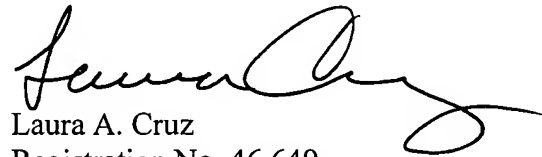
Claim 26 is new. Applicant submits Claim 26 is allowable over the references of record.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicant submits that Claims 12-21 and 23-26 are allowable. If there are any questions or comments, the Examiner may contact the applicant's attorney at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

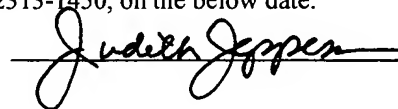
CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR
JOHNSON KINDNESS^{PLLC}



Laura A. Cruz
Registration No. 46,649
Direct Dial No. 206.695.1725

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LXC:dmg/jlj

LAW OFFICES OF
CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESS^{PLLC}
1420 Fifth Avenue
Suite 2800
Seattle, Washington 98101
206.682.8100